

Defense Travel System Labor Relations Guide



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1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this guide is to describe the labor relations' issues Department of Defense (DoD) Components may encounter in implementing the Defense Travel System (DTS) at the post, camp, station and base levels. This information is intended for your use as a tool in working with local union representatives at each site where DTS will be implemented. Your local practices and collective bargaining agreements will determine specific bargaining obligations at each site. You should work closely with your Service/Agency management employment relation's specialist in determining appropriate and necessary steps in working with your labor relation's representative.

Defense Travel System-Limited (DTS-L) has been fielded at specific sites to facilitate the implementation of full DTS. All references included in this guide also apply to DTS-L.

2 BACKGROUND

Unions have been involved with the DTS at the National level from the beginning of the planning process for the system. In early 1998, the unions represented on the Defense Partnership Council (DPC) were provided the DTS Concept of Operations. In late 1998 and early 1999, the DTS Program Management Office (PMO) again met with and briefed the unions represented on the DPC to ensure they were up to date on the progress of the implementation of DTS and to provide an overview of DTS functionality.

The PMO also sent a representative to visit a number of DoD Components' locations to gather input to aid in development of this guide. At the same time, the PMO requested information from the DoD Components regarding potential issues during deployment of the system. As a result, the PMO has prepared this guide to serve as a read ahead package to be forwarded to the local management representative prior to implementation of DTS. Although we have notified the National Unions, actual negotiations may have to be conducted at the level of exclusive recognition.

3 UNION AGREEMENTS

Though unions are involved at the DoD level, a separate obligation exists to deal with unions holding exclusive recognition for the over 1500 bargaining units within the Department. Most of these units are at the activity or installation level, but a few exist at the major command or agency level. Managers must ensure that they meet any bargaining obligations prior to deployment of DTS at each site. Usually this means that management must advise the union of the intended change and give the union a reasonable amount of time to review the information and make its view known, which may result in a request to bargain the deployment of DTS. The Human Resources Office at each location will be able to provide information on the extent of this obligation.

There are likely few collective bargaining agreements, if any that specifically mention the travel management process. Where such agreements exist, they must be honored until they expire and are renegotiated even if they conflict with DTS. This does not, however, preclude the parties to the agreement from agreeing to reopen the agreement to bring it into compliance with DTS. The union is not generally required to do so, though your collective bargaining agreement may provide otherwise. And, as discussed earlier, even where there is no agreement, management

may not implement DTS prior to satisfying any bargaining obligations. This may impact the implementation date for the DTS changes at a particular location.

4 DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION

To facilitate implementation of DTS, we recommend that unions be continually informed about the progress of DTS. They should be involved in meetings held in preparation for implementation and be provided access to the most current deployment schedule. They should also be kept up to date on any regulatory changes involving travel procedures, the official government charge card program and any new procedures to be implemented along with the deployment of DTS. DoD Component representatives should include guidance in their overall DTS procedures on treatment of infrequent government-funded travel. They should ensure that the union representatives understand DTS is a significant quality of life issue; the Return on Investment from DTS at the local level; and the benefits DTS provides to bargaining unit members (quicker, more accurate reimbursement, more choices in making arrangements, knowledge of entitlement before travel, etc.). Emphasis should be placed on the fact that less time will be spent on travel administration, there will be decentralized control of budgets, and travelers will receive faster reimbursement for expenses incurred while performing official travel.

5 TRAINING

It is highly recommended that union representatives be invited to participate in any training that is conducted.

6 JOB CLASSIFICATIONS

It is the DoD Components' responsibility to ensure that position descriptions are updated where necessary to include new responsibilities for DTS. Where the position descriptions are for positions in the bargaining unit, bargaining obligations must be satisfied.

7 POTENTIAL ITEMS OF INTEREST

The following items are topics about which the union representatives have already expressed a high degree of concern:

7.1 Authorizing Official (AO) operating as Certifying Officer (CO)

Previously, certifying officers were part of the finance community. Under DTS, much of the responsibility for managing travel will be placed with the first-line supervisors in the capacity of an Authorizing Official. Many of these responsibilities are already inherent in current duties but are laborious and cumbersome. The DTS will provide automated tools to make this job easier. Supervisors will have more autonomy over their subordinates' travel.

7.2 Pecuniary liability (31 USC 3528)

Under the new Certifying Officer legislation, certain DoD employees become pecuniarily liable for negligence when improperly certifying vouchers for payment. This legislation affects areas other than travel, such as signing receiving reports and Government Purchase Card (GPC, formerly IMPAC) purchases, but these changes will be most visible with DTS.

7.3 Receipt Retention

Under the latest version of the DoD Financial Management Regulation, Vol. 9, authorizing officials who certify vouchers in DTS for payment are required to retain receipts for all lodging expenses, and all original receipts for individual reimbursable expenses of \$75 or more in the office where certification occurred and make those records available when requested for random post payment reviews and audits for 6 years 3 months. Receipts may be stored in electronic format with the DTS trip record or in the office where certification of the travel claim occurred. Early in 2004, DTS will have the ability for travelers to fax or upload a copy of supporting documentation, to include receipts, and add them to their trip records, eliminating the need for AOs to keep receipts for 6 years 3 months.

7.4 DoD PKI/Security of PKI Disks

The Federal Government through the Government Paper Elimination Action (GPEA - Oct 1998), is moving into a paperless, seamless world of Electronic Commerce (EC). The primary mechanism for EC is through the use of a digital signature (diskette) and the DoD Public Key Infrastructure (PKI), which supports it.

Personnel will be required to use a digital signature for Identification and Authentication (I&A) for computer system access and to 'sign' legal documents. For the DTS, a digital signature will be required to book travel, to validate travel expenses, and to approve voucher payments. Individuals will be responsible for maintaining proper security of their digital signature diskette. The DTS currently uses the DoD PKI Class 3 software token (diskette) for digital signature and the Common Access Card (CAC). Please note, that until the full transition to CAC is completed, the DTS must be able to handle both type of digital signature media (i.e. diskette and CAC).

7.5 Government Travel Charge Card Program

Many employees have traditionally received non-Automated Teller Machine (ATM) cash advances for travel and may well view them as an entitlement. Under this program, employees' ability to receive non-ATM cash advances will be severely curtailed. Further, the program provides for withdrawal of government charge card privileges and possible disciplinary measures if misuse of the card is substantiated. These may create a number of concerns including whether employees will have access to additional funds while traveling and the consequences of misuse of the card.

7.6 Implementation of Public Law 105-264

Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998 – October 19, 1998 – Effective July 16, 1999, the interim rule amending the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) provisions pertaining to payment by the Government of expenses connected with official Government travel was published. This law requires Federal employees to use the travel charge card, or any Federal contractor-issued travel charge card, for most payments of expenses of official government travel. These policies are effective immediately and will be applied to travel payments for travel beginning after April 30, 2000, within the DoD.

7.7 Implementation of Public Law 107-314

The Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2003 enacted section 2784 of title 10, “Management of Travel Cards,” which included provision relating to mandatory split disbursement. Effective April 23, 2003, the Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller) directed that all expenses of official travel be separately identified in travel claims so that these amounts can be disbursed directly to the travel charge card vendor. Mandatory split disbursement is currently in effect for military travelers, and shall be implemented for civilian employees once bargaining with local unions is completed. The Defense Travel System identifies expenses that are required to be split disbursed and defaults these payments to be disbursed directly to the travel charge card vendor. Until bargaining with local unions is complete, employees will be able to change or eliminate the amount of the split disbursement. Once mandatory split disbursement goes into effect, employees will need to justify any reduction in the amount sent to the travel charge card vendor.

7.8 Infrequent Travelers

Infrequent travelers have traditionally not been given access to government travel charge cards in many commands. Also, infrequent travelers might have difficulties understanding the new travel procedures, and fail to plan sufficiently far in advance of travel. Understanding the full capabilities of each part of the “system,” training and proper operation of DTS will mitigate the items mentioned above. Simplified entitlements and the compliancy checks embedded in DTS enable travelers and AOs to better understand the rules governing travel. Effective use of DTS will overcome many potential union concerns.

8 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional contact information visit the DTS Website at www.defensetravel.osd.mil.

9 SUMMARY

It is the responsibility of each DoD Component to ensure that the union representatives at each site are kept apprised of the implementation of DTS. To facilitate this, the following points are provided to help smooth the way for deployment:

- Keep local unions informed of the implementation of DTS at each state of implementation and satisfy any bargaining obligations.
- Emphasize Quality of Life benefits of DTS in discussions with the unions and to bargaining unit members.
- Invite unions to participate in training.
- Update position descriptions where necessary and appropriately classify the revised position.
- Distribute DTS deployment schedule.
- Understand the laws, regulations, and policies governing DoD travel.
- Keep the unions involved!

As DTS is implemented, it is important that the lines of communication among the PMO, DoD Component, Labor Relations representatives, and union representatives remain open. This will

help to quickly identify issues, inform all participants of new policies and procedures, and avoid misunderstandings.